Working Paper No. 43

STATE BUILDING AND DEMOCRATIZATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: FORWARDS, BACKWARDS, OR TOGETHER?

by Michael Bratton

A comparative series of national public attitude surveys on democracy, markets and civil society in Africa.

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Introduction

The latest literature on political development in Africa is bifurcated. At issue is whether the state or political regime constitutes the essential object of analysis. By *the state*, I mean the bone-structure of the body politic or, to paraphrase the classic definition, the set of fixed administrative institutions that claim legitimate command over a bounded territory. The characteristic institutions of the state are its coercive arms – army, police, and courts – and, in its modern variant, specialized bureaucracies governed by norms of law and reason. By *political regime*, I mean the set of procedures – sometimes called the rules of the political game – that determine who may make decisions and how. Differences among regimes are captured in the first instance by the contrast between democratic and authoritarian rule and, more finely, by further procedural distinctions. In essence, scholars diverge on the issue of whether contemporary African politics are best apprehended as a matter of structure or process.

One group – the regime-centered analysts – studies changes in political processes introduced into Africa at the trailing edge of a global Third Wave of democratization (e.g. Wiseman, 1995; Bratton and van de Walle, 1997; Diamond and Plattner, 1999; Ndegwa, 2001; Gyimah-Boadi, 2004). They describe the mass protests, elite struggles, and international pressures that were brought to bear on the military and one party governments of postcolonial Africa in the aftermath of the Cold War. They track the processes of confrontation and bargaining – within the political elite, and among elites, masses and donors – that led to the opening up of these ossified regimes in the 1990s, including the reintroduction of competitive, multiparty elections. The best work in this genre conceptualizes democratization as an open-ended process of regime change that sometimes results in the installation of freely elected governments, but which is readily distorted or derailed at any stage. After an initial burst of theoretical creativity, in which concepts from the literature on political transitions elsewhere in the world were adapted to African realities, the regime-centered paradigm ran out of steam (Carothers, 2002). For a while, analysts of Africa experimented with empty constructs like "pseudo" or "virtual" democracy (Diamond, 1999; Joseph, 1999). But, as soon became apparent, the notion of democratic consolidation can never adequately account for the emergence of new regimes that almost invariably fall well short of full democracy.

Another group of scholars – the statists – argues that the optic of regimes is misplaced. In order to understand how post-transition African politics quickly lapse back into business as usual, it is instead necessary to attend to fundamental political structures. State-centered analysts concur that the state is the dominant institutional edifice in the African social landscape (e.g. Villalon and Huxtable, 1998; Englebert, 2000; Beissinger and Young, 2002), even if they disagree on whether the state is absorbed by, or autonomous from, its society (see Chabal and Daloz, 1999 versus van de Walle, 2003). This school recognizes that Africa's vast territories and generally low population densities have always posed a challenge to political leaders intent on projecting central authority over outlying areas (Herbst, 2000). The structure of authority is therefore uneven, with public bureaucracies reaching most deeply into areas of cash crop or mineral production, where rulers extract the resources needed for governing (Boone, 2003). During its construction, the state in Africa has usually been turned to personal ends, including the enrichment of ruling classes and the selective distribution of rewards to loyal clients. Under conditions of economic decline, however, state elites can only remain in power by resorting to violence, including by devolving the means of coercion to private militias. The outcome is rife with irony: not only do the trustees of the state ultimately undermine its capacity; state-centered analysts discover that the object of their attention is dissolving before their eyes.

These competing perspectives lead to alternative prescriptions about ways forward in the analysis of African politics. On one hand, I am persuaded by the statist argument that little can be accomplished in the realm of democratization in the absence of basic political order. To express the argument crudely, free and fair elections can hardly be held if voters fear that they will be assaulted or killed if they go to the polls. On the other hand, I recognize that the collapse of African states can only be reversed if ordinary

citizens come to grant to the structures of authority at least as much legitimacy as they did at the time of political independence. This transformation would seem to require a "second independence" of regime transition, whereby excesses of state-sponsored violence and official corruption are curbed by a healthy dose of democratic accountability. Indeed, it was precisely in protest against elite abuse of political office that mass pro-democracy movements were first born in Africa in the 1990s.

As a preferred way forward, this article therefore attempts to bridge the present divide in African political studies by explicitly restoring analytic contact between states and regimes. It asks: What kinds of political regime presently prevail in Africa? And what are the empirical characteristics of African states? Are these state characteristics related to the nature of the regime? In particular, what aspects of state building are most conducive to democratization? And which comes first: state or democracy? These questions are examined using both aggregate data at the country level and survey data at the individual level, the better to determine whether there is consistency across macro and micro answers.

To anticipate answers, I find that state building and democratization are highly complementary. Across sub-Saharan Africa, democratization has enjoyed bright prospects only in the context of relatively effective states. It goes almost without saying that democracy has never been nurtured in the absence of political order, where the state has failed or collapsed, or where civil society has been supplanted by civil war. In this regard, state building would seem to come first. At the same time, however, among various state characteristics that I examine – namely the scope of authority, the capacity of bureaucracies, and the legitimacy of the state itself – the last element is critical. This begs the question of how state legitimacy is attained. The solution offered here – which brings the argument full circle – is that legitimacy is a product of democratization.

By seeing what happens when intellectual traditions are juxtaposed and linked, this article hopes to help reinvigorate thinking about both state building and regime change in Africa. If, at the same time, I can also summarize the empirical status of democratic experiments on that continent and hint at directions for the future, then so much the better.

The State-Regime Relationship: Some Theory

Several bodies of theory already exist that provide useful frames for thinking about potential relationships between state structure and regime change. Three contributions stand out, which I seek to integrate and build upon.

Linz and Stepan (1996) stake out a definitive position: "Democracy is a form of governance of a state. Thus no modern polity can become democratically consolidated unless it is first a state" (p. 7). They focus on the under-theorized and barely analyzed problem of *stateness*, defined variously as the enforcement of "a claim to a monopoly of the legitimate use of force in the territory," as "the effective capacity to command, regulate, and extract," or as the ability to resolve "profound differences about…who has the right of citizenship in that state" (pp. 7 and 16). An authoritarian regime may "impose acquiescence over large groups of people for a long period of time without threatening the coherence of the state." But "if a significant group of people…do not want to be part of the political unit…this presents a serious problem for democratic transition and even more serious problems for democratic consolidation"(p. 27). Beyond the prerequisite of political community, the consolidation of democracy requires, among other things, "a state bureaucracy that is usable by the new democratic regime" (p.11).

While Linz and Stepan arrive at important insights, their formulation is vague. Sometimes they see stateness as a precondition for democratic consolidation, but at other times they portray "a usable state" as merely one "arena" of democratic practice (the other arenas are a civil society, a political society, a rule of

law, and a mixed economy). Moreover, an abstract idea like stateness is patently a compound construct, but these authors do not completely or consistently unpack it into a set of research concepts. For example: How does one distinguish a claim to govern within a given territory (the scope of the state) from the range of aptitudes required to govern in practice (state capacity)?

By implication and extension, however, Linz and Stepan's formulae contain several of the building blocks necessary for an operational theory of the state. One such block is the *scope of the state*, or the extent to which a central administrative elite succeeds in incorporating an entire geographical area within territorial boundaries. State scope can be measured in terms of the presence of an institutional infrastructure of armed outposts, administrative offices, or service centers. A second dimension refers to *state capacity*, or the wherewithal of each state agency to execute its appointed tasks. Does the police force establish order? Does the tax department extract revenues? Do the welfare agencies deliver health and education services? The execution of various public functions requires a wide range of capabilities, the performance of which, when taken together, amount to effective governance. Third and finally, Linz and Stepan draw attention to the willingness of citizens to accept the jurisdiction of the state and obey the commands of its agents. These citizen attitudes and behavior define the key dimension of *state legitimacy*. In short, the strength of any state depends in good part on whether citizens assent that governing elites have a right to rule.

Richard Rose and Doh Chull Shin (2001) endorse the view that state building is a prerequisite for the completion of a process of democratization. They note that, "While free elections are necessary, they are not sufficient for democratization. In many third-wave democracies, something is missing, but what is it? The short answer is: the basic institutions of the modern state" (p.332). Countries in the first wave of democracy, before 1917, developed a modern state before universal suffrage was introduced; they democratized "forwards" on an institutional foundation of a rule of law, a vibrant civil society, and the accountability of governors. By contrast, third wave regimes since 1975 often democratize "backwards" by introducing mass elections without benefit of these key institutions. "The governors of these new democracies thus face a double challenge: completing the construction of the modern state while competing with their critics in free elections" (p336). As a frustrated local government official recently remarked in South Africa, this is akin to moving the furniture into a house before you have finished building it.

Rose and Shin's distinction between democratization "forwards" and "backwards" paints a compelling and memorable image. But this theory blurs the boundary between states and regimes. Take the indicators of a modern state cited by these authors: a rule of law, a civil society, and political accountability. Only one of these institutions – the rule of law – is arguably an attribute of states though, even here, one could plausibly contend, as I do later in this article, that the diffusion of legal authority is as much a matter of procedure as of structure. Be that as it may, it is more difficult to make a case that civil society is part of the state; at minimum it is an adjunct domain and many would contend that the development of civil society always occurs outside the state, and often in opposition to it. Finally, in my opinion, the accountability of governors is attribute of regimes – not of states – because, with reference to our initial definition of a regime, political accountability refers to rules of the political game. To be sure, the rules may specify that political accountability is purely horizontal, for example between a hereditary ruler and council of lords or elders, as in a traditional oligarchic regime. But when political accountability is vertical, between elected leaders and a mass voting public, then surely we are in the presence of the regime of democracy.

It may transpire, of course, that states and regimes are more conflated in practice than these conceptual distinctions allow. But my research strategy is to define state and regime independently, to measure their relative extents in African countries, and to search for possible relationships, before arriving at any conclusion that these realms may be interpenetrated. To repeat, I am basically sympathetic to the

argument that democracy building is easier in the presence of an established state. Rose and Shin are undoubtedly right that the prospects for democracy are better in the Czech Republic (an established state with a democratic past) than in South Korea (a growing state with an autocratic past) and that both these countries have better democratic prospects than Russia (a broken state with a totalitarian past). Yet all these cases, Russia included, possess more extensive, capacious, and legitimate states than any country in sub-Saharan Africa today with the possible exception of South Africa. African countries face the very special problem – more confining perhaps than even a history of totalitarianism – of building democracy on the weak foundation of a hollowed-out and largely bankrupt, postcolonial state.

In the final theoretical contribution reviewed here, Hadenius (2001) helps us further explore the state-regime connection. Via a virtuoso review of comparative history, he argues that the emergence and consolidation of democracy require a special kind of state. "Only certain institutional arrangements, tied to a certain mode of state, promote the evolution of the coordination capacities required for the practice of popular rule" (p.131). A so-called "interactive state…is open for intercourse in regulated ways with its citizens," including arrangements that lay the groundwork for a regime of political accountability. This form of state originally arose only in parts of Western Europe – England, Sweden, Netherlands – and North America because, in these places, "no decisions of any import could be made without negotiating with society's leading groups" (p.199). Elsewhere in the region – in Russia, Prussia, Spain and France – autocratic regimes built centralized or militarized states, which disintegrated when rulers could no longer extract resources from society or were defeated in war.

In contrast to these European experiences, postcolonial African states have neither entered "interactively" into productive and accountable partnerships with their civil societies, nor have they accumulated the autonomous capacities of an administrative or military "leviathan" (pp. 246-249). Instead, African states are either "predatory," having embedded themselves in society by buying popular support through rent seeking and corruption, or entirely "marginal" to society, having lost any capacity to penetrate, extract and regulate (pp.250-53). As Jackson and Rosberg (1982) established, African states usually display the outward, ceremonial and juridical attributes of statehood, but lack a meaningful empirical presence in many parts of their territories. Under these circumstances, the creation of state capacity at the periphery would seem to require the decentralization of government authority, the mobilization of local energies within civil society, and the establishment of new rules governing the relationship between citizens and state. Indeed, these elements are central to the project of democratization that is now preferred by many African citizens and promoted by international donor agencies.

In this way, an interactive state holds out the promise of a third way between democratization forwards or backwards. In a mutually reinforcing process, state building and regime consolidation occur (or fail to occur) together. In the virtuous version of this cycle, democratization helps build institutions that link citizens to the state while, at the same time, state building increases capacities to improve mass welfare. But a vicious cycle is perhaps more probable, especially in Africa: leaders who are less than fully committed to democracy resist responding to popular needs and, as a result, citizens withdraw still further from the orbit of an already marginal state. At worst, the decay of the state and the corruption of elites together contribute to a downward spiral of disorder and deprivation. Whatever the outcomes – and these can be expected to vary across Africa's diverse countries – state building and democratization are integral and equally important priorities that are best considered together.

What, then is the current status of political regimes and state structures on the African continent? As a prelude to probing the state-regime connection, the next two sections review some available data.

The Nature of African Political Regimes

Africans prefer democracy to other political regimes they have known. As of 2003, almost two-thirds of all adults interviewed in 15 African countries opted for democracy above non-democratic alternatives and over three quarters rejected military rule and presidential dictatorship (Afrobarometer Network, 2004a). There is suggestive early evidence that such popular commitments to democracy are not fixed and may be in decline over time – the proportion who *both* support democracy *and* reject all autocratic alternatives – fell from 48 percent to 37 percent between 2000 and 2003 (Bratton, 2004). Nonetheless, such commitments can be refreshed by electoral alternations of power, as evidenced by high or rising levels of support for democracy in countries like Ghana, Kenya, Mali and Senegal, in which citizens have recently used elections to overturn entrenched ruling parties at the polls.

Even if citizens demand democracy, however, political elites do not always supply it. When asked, "how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in your country?" just 54 percent of all adults report being either "fairly" or "very" satisfied.[1] While the proportion who were fairly satisfied remained steady between 2000 and 2003, the proportion that was very satisfied dropped slightly. And satisfaction with democracy plummeted in Nigeria, from 84 percent in January 2000 to just 35 percent in October 2003. Citizens also estimate the extent of democracy in response to the question: "In your opinion, how much of a democracy is your country today?"[2] While a rising proportion thinks that their countries are democracies of some kind, a clear majority realistically depicts African democracies as regimes with "minor" or "major" problems (65 percent). Again, Nigerians are especially downbeat.

Complementing the microscopic opinions of individual citizens, Table 1 provides a macroscopic snapshot from above. It maps the distribution of political regimes for all countries in sub-Saharan Africa in December 2002, as captured by the familiar political rights and civil liberties scores published by Freedom House. Building on regime categories devised by Diamond (2002), the table displays the status of democracy on the continent at a moment just prior to the electoral transition that removed the founding nationalist party in Kenya. At that time, more than a decade after a wave of democratization began to break on African shores, 15 of sub-Saharan Africa's 48 political regimes were certifiable as democracies. With the addition of Kenya, fully one-third of all countries on the continent could be so classified by 2003.

But the quality of democracy in Africa is strained. Only five countries, containing just 7 percent of the continent's population, deserve to be called *liberal democracies*. In these places, governments came to power peacefully in free multiparty elections and subsequently held regular polls at intervals prescribed by national constitutions. Elections have led to alternations of leadership on the island states of Mauritius and Cape Verde, events rarely seen in African politics, but not yet in Botswana and South Africa.[3] As the label implies, liberal democracy embodies respect for civil and political liberties, for example as leaders tolerate press criticism, even as they do not actively encourage or embrace dissent.[4] Liberties are upheld by relatively effective legislative and judicial institutions, which act with a fair degree of independence within a largely rule-governed political process. South Africa has led the way by establishing a constitutional court that undertakes rigorous judicial review of test cases based on an expansive bill of rights. And, to date, Africa's liberal democracies have benefited from moderate to low levels of corruption.

Although their citizens are able to make unobstructed choices at the polls, Africa's liberal democracies still often fall short on the enforcement of personal freedoms, especially with regard to gender equality and the delivery of socioeconomic rights. Because African women still face widespread discrimination, and due to practical ambiguities over the protection of private property and the provision of social welfare, there is no African country that yet warrants a top score on civil liberties.

Table 1: The Nature of Political Regimes, Sub-Saharan Africa, 2002

REGIME TYPE	Regime Subtype	Country	Freedom House Scores	
			Political Rights	Civil Liberties
DEMOCRACY	Liberal Democracy	Cape Verde	1	2
		Mauritius	1	2
		Sao Tome & Principe	1	2
		South Africa	1	2
		Botswana	2	2
	Electoral Democracy	Ghana	2	3
		Lesotho	2♠	3♠
		Mali	2	3
		Namibia	2	3
		Senegal	2♠	3♠
		Benin	3	2
		Seychelles	3	3
		Madagascar	3♥	4
		Malawi	4	4♥
		Niger	4	4
SEMI-DEMOCRACY/ SEMI-AUTOCRACY	Ambiguous Hybrid	Mozambique	3	4
		Tanzania	4	3♠
		Nigeria	4	4
		Zambia	4♠	4
		Djibouti	4	5
		Sierra Leone	4	5
AUTOCRACY	Liberalized Autocracy (Competitive)	Guinea Bissau	4	4♠
		Gabon	5	4
		Kenya	5♠	4♠
		Central African Republic	5	5
		Gambia	5	5
		Togo	5	5
		Ethiopia	5	5
		Cameroon	6	6
		Zimbabwe	6	6
	Liberalized Autocracy (Hegemonic)	Burkina Faso	4	4
		Comoros	5♠	4
		Congo - Brazzaville	6♥	4
		Uganda	6	4♠
		Mauritania	5	5
		Chad	6	5
		Guinea	6	5
		Angola	6	5
		Cote d'Ivoire	6♥	6♥
		Liberia	6	6
		Equatorial Guinea	6	7
	Unreformed Autocracy	Swaziland	6	5
		Burundi	6	5♠
		Rwanda	7	5♠
		Congo - Kinshasa	6	6
		Eritrea	7	6
		Somalia	6	7
		Sudan	7	7

Notes to Table 1:
♠ increase in freedom, 2002
♥ decrease in freedom, 2002

N = 48

Sources: Adapted from Larry Diamond, "Thinking About Hybrid Regimes," *Journal of Democracy*, 13, 2, 2002, Table 2. Updated through December 1, 2002 using Adrian Karatnycky, "Liberty's Advances in a Troubled World: the 30th Anniversary Freedom House Survey," *Journal of Democracy*, 14, 1, 2004, Table 2.

Instead, most African democracies resemble a second-best subtype. The continent's ten *electoral democracies* have civilian, constitutional systems that clearly meet minimal democratic standards, namely that legislative and chief executive offices are filled via popular choice under universal suffrage. The regime is founded and renewed by elections that observers, monitors, and losing candidates judge as fundamentally free and fair.[5] In electoral democracies, however, civil and political liberties – especially between elections – are not universally secure. Political minorities are sometimes sidelined from the protections of the constitution and justifiably complain of neglect, as in Malawi and Namibia. Moreover, freedom of speech is compromised by government domination of the electronic media, which endows the ruling party or coalition with the loudest voice in the land. Most importantly, political power remains concentrated in the hands of executive presidents to the point that significant arenas of decision-making lie beyond the control of other elected officials. While legislatures try to claim authority, for instance on budget matters in Benin and Ghana, parliamentarians more often perform as docile handmaidens of the executive branch.[6] And as ruling political parties increase their parliamentary majorities in second and subsequent elections, executive and legislative powers become fused.[7]

Moreover, freedom ratings in electoral democracies are fluid, even from year to year. During 2002, for example, political rights declined in Madagascar (due to a standoff between rivals in a disputed election) and civil liberties shrank in Malawi (as the government tried to quash opposition criticism of the president's bid for a third term). By contrast, Senegal experienced growth in both forms of freedom (not least through the expansion of public communications centers and community radio stations) and Lesotho advanced from being a liberalized autocracy to an electoral democracy (by virtue of a successful election held under a newly proportional electoral law). Where the quality of elections is consistently high, and improvements are registered with each round of voting – as in Ghana – a country may even begin to satisfy one of the basic requirements for the consolidation of democracy.

Below the threshold of electoral democracy lie *ambiguous hybrid regimes*. As Diamond notes, "more regimes than ever before are adopting the *form* of electoral democracy…but fail to meet the substantive test" (2002, p.22). At present there are at least half a dozen African countries whose political arrangements occupy a gray zone between democracy and autocracy. To be sure, elections are convened on schedule in places like Nigeria, Zambia, and Tanzania but these contests are characteristically marred by dubious voter registers, campaigns of intimidation and vote-buying, questionable ballot counts, and challenges to the results by disillusioned losers. Once in power, elected leaders govern much as before by resorting to arbitrary and personalistic tactics of neopatrimonial rule, whereby power and patronage emanate principally from the office of the president. In Tanzania, for example, elections have not prevented presidents from continuing to hand pick their successors; and in Mozambique, the impending retirement of the supremo, Joaquin Chissano, threatens to create a power vacuum that political institutions are ill-equipped to fill.

The most common way of organizing national politics in Africa at the end of 2002, however, was not democracy at all, but what we call *liberalized autocracy* and what others call "electoral," "competitive," or "semi-" authoritarianism (Diamond, 2002; Levitsky and Way, 2002; Ottaway, 2003). Covering more than half the continent's countries and over two-thirds of its population, liberalized autocracies derive their ethos from previous military and one-party arrangements, now adapted for survival in a more open environment. Leaders in these systems may pay lip service to basic political freedoms, for example by allowing token opposition. But they govern in heavy-handed fashion, typically placing strict limits on the independent press, civic organizations and political parties to the point even of imprisoning their strongest opponents or barring them from contesting elections. As evidenced by recent multiparty contests in Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, and Kenya (before 2002), elections are nominally competitive but are seriously flawed by ethnic conflict and the fact that the opposition can never win. At the extreme, as in Chad and Liberia, elections are the only available antidote to violence: voters calculate that the best prospects for peace lie in voting armed strongmen into office, and granting them hegemonic power, rather than allowing them continue to prosecute a civil war. Even once-democratic regimes, like Cote d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe, may slide back into these forms of autocracy due to power grabs by a military or civilian elite.

Finally, I count seven *unreformed autocracies* where governments make no pretence at seeking legitimacy through competitive elections. Leaders came to power through heredity (as in Swaziland), military coup (as in Burundi), or armed insurgency (as in Eritrea or Rwanda). In other cases (for example, Sudan), sham elections are held in the parts of the country that the government controls, but major segments of the electorate are excluded, as are the opposition forces that represent such areas. These countries are often embroiled in extended internal conflicts that preoccupy their governments and can lead to the collapse of central state authority (as in Somalia and Congo-Kinshasa). As official control breaks down and weapons flood society, people are increasingly exposed to violence and extortion at the hands of local warlords and armed gangs. In these countries, political liberalization either is never attempted or is captured and distorted by faction leaders who stand to gain from the demise of central authority.

Thus, political regimes in sub-Saharan Africa have undergone change while also experiencing considerable continuity. In practice, inherited monopolies of power remain embedded in the heart of African political systems. Especially in countries where soldiers once ruled, the various armed forces resist domestication and continue to arrogate a wide range of reserve powers (O'Donnell, 1994). In Nigeria, for example, the army has unilaterally launched pogroms against protesters in minority ethnic enclaves that the elected administration of Olusegun Obasanjo appears powerless to halt. Moreover, within the realm of civilian authority, the task of dividing and distributing presidential power has barely begun. Instead, neopatrimonial tendencies live on. Even in post-Mandela South Africa – a liberal democracy – Thabo Mbeki has added extensive powers to the office of the president, overturned party preferences to install loyalist leaders in the provinces, and shown himself willing to set policy priorities – including treatment for AIDS victims – on the basis of personal whim.

Bearing in mind that regimes (sets of rules about how decisions are made) and states (organizations that claim a monopoly of control over territory) are conceptually separable constructs, we now turn from categorizing the former to describing the forms currently taken by the latter in Africa.

The Characteristics of African States

The recent publication by the World Bank Institute (WBI) of a time series of governance indicators 1996-2002, has greatly eased the task of measuring state characteristics for all the world's countries (Kauffman, Kraay and Mastruzzi, 2003). The authors estimate aggregate values on six dimensions: voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption.[8] Each variable is constructed from perceptions of governance found in ratings of experts,

surveys of businesspeople, and polls of citizens, as compiled in 25 separate data sources by 18 different organizations. Because of large margins of error around the point estimates, "cross-country comparisons of the levels of governance based on this data should be made with due caution" (p. 1).

Most, but not all, of these concepts are well suited to this article's purpose of measuring stateness. As argued earlier, I see "voice and accountability" as political regime characteristics and therefore drop this dimension when analysing the state.[9] But the remaining WBI indices provide a useful framework. "Political stability" measures the likelihood that the existing order will be destabilized or overthrown by violent means, including by domestic insurgents or international terrorists. "Government effectiveness" gathers perceptions of the quality, competence and independence of the civil service together with estimates of how well public services are delivered. "Regulatory quality" refers to the installation of market-friendly economic policies; though perhaps best suited as a measure of the prevailing economic regime, this index is retained here as an inverse proxy for the extent of state intervention. The "rule of law" measures "the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society" (p.4), based on the rate of crime, the fairness of the judiciary, and the enforceability of contracts. Finally, "control of corruption" captures perceptions of the extent to which the official pursuit of private gain – whether petty or grand – is believed to distort public performance.

Table 2 reports the WBI estimates of the above state characteristics for African countries in 2002, with higher scores corresponding to better governance. Entries are standardized so that each index has a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one for all countries in the world. Three findings stand out from the welter of data. First, the mean governance scores for the 48 countries in sub-Saharan Africa (which range from –0.54 to –0.71) consistently fall well below the means for all 199 countries and territories (which are set at zero). These results verify the conventional view that, by global standards, African countries possess weak states and suffer sub-par governance.

Second, African states fall shorter on some state characteristics than others. In Table 2, the number of African countries that score above the global mean ranges from a high of 16 on political stability to a low of 5 on regulatory quality. These findings suggest – this time contrary to received wisdom – that political order has been established in some parts of Africa; for about one-third of sub-Saharan countries, this basic requirement of statehood has been largely met. One can quibble with some of the WBI scores: is statehood really secure in Gambia, for example, a country in an unstable region that itself suffered a military coup within the last decade? But, as the data show, it is incontrovertible that governments on the socially homogenous island states of Seychelles, Mauritius, and Cape Verde enjoy higher levels of uncontested territorial integrity and face fewer armed separatist movements than the governments of unmanageably large landmasses like Congo-Kinshasa and Sudan.

In terms of regulatory quality, however, encompassing generalizations are even possible. With few exceptions (like Botswana, Mauritius and South Africa), African countries have failed to reform the bonds of excessive economic regulation in such areas as international trade, foreign investment, and business development. Political elites and mass publics alike continue to prefer a mixed model of development in which the state plays a central guiding and provisioning role in the economy (Bratton, Mattes, and Gyimah-Boadi, forthcoming 2004, Ch. 4). In terms too of government effectiveness, African states generally tend to under-perform. Of the 6 countries with positive scores on this dimension, two barely manage to reach the global average (Ghana and Seychelles). Instead, according to the WBI, the effectiveness of government is the weakest area of performance for African states (averaging –0.71 overall), with under-administered territories countries like Guinea, Chad and Malawi illustrating the African norm.

Third, there is notable variation in the quality of states in Africa that requires explanation in its own right, and that potentially drives other political or developmental outcomes. As marked by the shaded cells in

Table 2, 19 countries in the sub-Saharan subcontinent attain a positive score on one or more dimensions of good governance. Five of these countries – led by Botswana and Mauritius – attain positive scores on at least four of these dimensions.[10] At the other end of the scale, five countries[11] – including regional powers like Nigeria and Angola – score less than minus one on all five dimensions. Importantly, cases tend to cluster at opposite poles: if a country scores well on one dimension of governance, it is likely to score well on others; but if it does badly on any one indicator, it is likely to do so consistently across the board. Indeed, factor analysis detects a single, underlying concept that accounts for more than three quarters of the shared variance in the five indices. [12] For the purpose of the present analysis, I use this common empirical core to operationalize the master concept of *stateness*.

To add substance to the WBI's abstract summary statistics, and to place them in context, it is desirable to return to the survey data. In particular, we seek information on the scope of the state infrastructure in Africa and on popular perceptions of the capacities and legitimacy of the state.

On the *scope of the state*, the Afrobarometer measures the presence or absence of public services in randomly selected localities, usually census enumeration areas. As Table 3 shows, this infrastructure varies greatly according to service and location. A primary or secondary school is available in 78 percent of all localities, with no detectable statistical difference between town and countryside in this respect. By contrast, a railway station serves prospective travelers in only 8 percent of all localities and in just 4 percent of rural localities. Apart from education, all other public services are present in fewer than half of all localities, and vast (and statistically significant) gaps separate urban and rural areas, especially with respect to the availability of paved roads, sewer systems, piped drinking water, and household electricity. For example, whereas 87 percent of urban dwellers live in areas served by an electricity grid, only 27 percent of rural residents do so.

Moreover, the agencies of law and order are thin on the ground. The surveys recorded a visible police or army presence in only 28 and 11 percent of localities respectively. Based on the penetration of coercive agencies into the countryside, it appears that the state reaches furthest into the periphery in Botswana (where 53 percent of rural areas had a visible police presence in 2003) and Tanzania (where 20 percent had a visible army presence). By contrast, the scope of the state is truncated in Malawi (where police were observed in only 6 percent of rural localities in 2003), as well as in Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, and Zambia (where soldiers were present in 3 percent or less of all rural localities).

Turning to *state capacity*, ordinary citizens harbor an overly rosy view of the diminished capabilities of African states. More than half (52 percent) of all adults think that, "the government can solve …all or most…of the country's problems" (See Table 4). A more pragmatic view prevails in Cape Verde, Ghana, Tanzania, and Uganda, however, where more people recognize that weak states can rectify only "some" or "very few" or "none" of a country's developmental shortcomings. People also have faith that the political authorities can reliably impose law and order. The average African thinks that law enforcement has improved rather than declined over recent years, including with respect to the safety of the public from crime and violence. But, given what we know about the short outreach of police forces, the pervasiveness of crime, and the corruption of court systems in many countries,[13] such estimates seem wildly exaggerated. At minimum, these results imply that an image of a strong central state infuses the public imagination, and that people are unable to imagine any realistic set of institutional alternatives to even a declining African state.

Table 2: Characteristics of the State, Sub-Saharan Africa, 2002.

	Political Stability	Government Effectiveness	Regulatory Quality	Rule of Law	Control of Corruption
Angola	-1.60	-1.16	-1.33	-1.56	-1.12
Benin	0.63	-0.62	-0.56	-0.42	-0.61
Botswana	0.75	0.87	0.81	0.72	0.76
Burkina Faso	-0.10	-0.69	-0.21	-0.55	-0.04
Burundi	-2.00	-1.46	-1.25	-1.49	-1.02
Cameroon	-0.50	-0.62	-0.88	-1.28	-1.10
Cape Verde	0.81	-0.20	-0.22	0.19	0.33
C. A. Republic	-1.87	-1.43	-0.76	-0.88	-1.02
Chad	-1.78	-0.75	-1.11	-0.93	-1.02
Comoros	-0.19	-0.84	-1.01	-0.84	-0.73
Congo - Brazzaville	-1.64	-1.25	-1.00	-1.22	-0.94
Congo - Kinshasa	-2.42	-1.60	-1.77	-1.79	-1.42
Djibouti	-0.69	-0.88	-0.76	-0.51	-0.73
Equatorial Guinea	0.31	-1.37	-1.45	-1.19	-1.89
Eritrea	-0.25	-0.44	-1.17	-0.51	0.04
Ethiopia	-1.20	-0.89	-1.00	-0.44	-0.35
Gabon	0.20	-0.45	-0.19	-0.27	-0.55
Gambia	0.55	-0.81	-0.55	-0.50	-0.83
Ghana	-0.11	0.01	-0.29	-0.15	-0.40
Guinea	-1.78	-0.78	-0.83	-0.75	-0.58
Guinea Bissau	-0.47	-1.35	-0.86	-1.00	-0.61
Ivory Coast	-2.04	-0.89	-0.36	-1.21	-0.86
Kenya	-0.86	-0.85	-0.50	-1.04	-1.05
Lesotho	-0.06	-0.26	-0.48	-0.01	-0.28
Liberia	-2.28	-1.51	-1.43	-1.42	-0.98
Madagascar	0.30	-0.38	-0.26	-0.19	0.14
Malawi	0.31	-0.68	-0.36	-0.34	-0.91
Mali	-0.10	-0.84	-0.49	-0.54	-0.32
Mauritania	0.43	-0.16	0.01	-0.33	0.23
Mauritius	0.99	0.53	0.46	0.89	0.53
Mozambique	0.55	-0.41	-0.64	-0.65	-1.01
Namibia	0.46	0.18	0.26	0.45	0.21
Niger	-0.30	-0.79	-0.68	-0.78	-1.10
Nigeria	-1.49	-1.12	-1.18	-1.35	-1.35
Rwanda	-1.35	-0.82	-0.94	-1.01	-0.58
Sao Tome	0.56	-0.64	-0.34	-0.45	-0.25
Senegal	-0.36	-0.18	-0.22	-0.20	-0.17
Seychelles	1.06	0.00	-0.23	0.52	0.52
Sierra Leone	-1.47	-1.54	-1.31	-1.25	-0.82
Somalia	-1.95	-1.97	-2.04	-2.05	-1.19
South Africa	-0.09	0.52	0.60	0.19	0.36
Sudan	-1.94	-1.11	-1.17	-1.36	-1.09
Swaziland	0.24	-0.44	-0.25	-0.67	-0.26
Tanzania	-0.25	-0.51	-0.55	-0.49	-1.00
Togo	0.01	-1.17	-0.63	-0.67	-0.68
Uganda	-1.46	-0.41	-0.01	-0.84	-0.92
Zambia	-0.02	-0.93	-0.60	-0.52	-0.97
Zimbabwe	-1.62	-0.80	-1.61	-1.33	-1.17
Mean	**-0.54**	**-0.71**	**-0.65**	**-0.67**	**-0.60**
Countries above mean	**16**	**6**	**5**	**6**	**8**

Notes to Table 2:
Entries are aggregate point estimates standardized so that each index has a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one. In other words, the means for all 199 countries are always zero; the means for 48 sub-Saharan African countries are shown in the bottom row. When comparing countries, the reader should take into account margins of measurement and sampling error as well as variations across the data sources that comprise each index (not shown). Moreover, cross-country comparisons are relative: rather than locating a country in relation to absolute standards of governance, the estimates measure a country's standing vis a vis standards prevailing in other countries in the world in 2002.

Shaded cells signify African countries that score above the global mean in 2002 on each index.

N = 48

Source: Culled from Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay and Massimo Mastruzzi, "Governance Matters III: Governance Indicators for 1996-2002," (Washington D.C.: World Bank Institute, June 30, 2003, www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance, Tables C2-C6).

Table 3: The Scope of the State: Public Service Infrastructure, 15 African Countries[a], 2002-3

Were any of the following services available in the primary sampling unit?[b]	**All Areas**	**Urban**	**Rural**	**Eta**
School	78	80	77	.012
Electricity grid	49	87	27	.234***
Health clinic	45	57	38	.060***
Piped water system	43	78	24	.237***
Police station	24	41	15	.127***
Sewer system	23	54	6	.245***
Paved road	23	42	13	.461***
Post office	18	32	10	.130***
Railway station	8	16	4	.126***
Police visible in locality	28	48	17	.215***
Soldiers visible in locality	11	18	7	.121***

Entries are percentages of interviewers recording "yes."

a. Botswana, Cape Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

b. Observations made by interviewer in consultation with survey supervisor. The primary sampling unit (PSU) is a census enumeration area.

N = 2,956 PSUs

*** p <.001

How well do African states perform routine administrative tasks? When citizens are asked citizens how "easy" or "difficult" it is to obtain certain core public services, huge discrepancies are revealed in reported service accessibility: whereas three-quarters of all respondents find it "easy" to get a voter registration card for themselves or to secure a place in primary school for a child, just on in ten say the same about "a loan or a payment from the government" (see Table 4). Only South Africans enjoy a functioning welfare system that caters to the needs of the indigent, disabled or elderly. For other Africans, monetary transfers invariably are hard to obtain: for example, small farmers and entrepreneurs have great difficulty raising loan capital from the public and private banking systems. Because they know that state agencies lack financial resources and administrative efficiency, one quarter of all adults "never

try" to get an identity document or seek help from the police. And almost four out of ten "never try" to get a business loan or a welfare payment from a government agency.

Table 4: Popular Perceptions of State Capacities, 15 African Countries, 2002-3

	Very Few/ None	Some	All/Most	Don't Know
What proportion of the country's problems do you think the government can solve?	12	33	52	2
	Much Less/ Less	Same	More/ Much More	Don't Know
Comparing the current government and the former government, would you say that the one we have now is more or less: Able to enforce the law?	21	17	56	6
	Much Worse/ Worse	Same	Better/ Much Better	Don't Know
Comparing the present system of government with the former system of government, are the following things worse or better: Safety from crime and violence?	32	18	45	4
	Very Difficult/ Difficult	Never Try	Easy/ Very Easy	Don't Know
Based on your experience, how easy or difficult is it to obtain the following services:				
A voter registration card?	13	6	80	2
A place in primary school for a child?	18	8	73	1
An identity document?	44	13	41	2
Help from the police?	43	23	32	3
Household services (e.g. water, electricity, telephone)?	48	25	22	5
A loan or payment from government?	45	39	10	6
	The State	Kin	Market	Other (inc. No-one)
To whom do you usually turn when you are unable to get:*				
Enough food to eat?	3	39	13	45
Enough clean water for home use?	10	11	7	72
Medicines or medical treatment?	25	18	19	38
Electricity in your home?	13	4	6	77
Enough fuel to cook your food?	3	17	20	60
A cash income?	3	41	6	52
	Never/Some of the Time		Always/Most of the Time	Don't Know
How much of the time do elected leaders try their best:				
To look after the interests of people like you?	76		19	4
To listen to what people like you have to say?	76		19	5

* of those who experience shortages of these basic needs

N= 23,197 Afrobarometer survey respondents

As another measure of the limited capacity of the state to deliver welfare services, the surveys ask people who they usually turn to when they encounter shortages of basic human needs: is it the state, or some other support system like family or marketplace? As Table 4 indicates, people vote with their feet by seeking out non-state substitutes. True, they rely on the state for medical care (but also on traditional healers and relatives) and for the provision of electricity services (rather than risking making an illegal hookup). Otherwise, people prefer the marketplace, for example for the acquisition of fuel for home cooking, and their kinfolk, especially for filling gaps in the availability of food and cash income. The fact that, in practice, merely one quarter of all adults turns to official agencies to address basic needs is hardly a vote of confidence in the welfare capacities of the state.

It therefore comes as little surprise that, with reference to political responsiveness, very few Africans think that, "elected leaders…look after the interests of people like (me)" or "listen to what people like (me) have to say" (both just 19 percent). Instead, fully three quarters charge that these agents of the state are neglectful.

These sobering results bring us to the subject of *state legitimacy*. In important respects, ordinary citizens think that the state in Africa operates within a rule of law. Certainly, most people consider the state – including its boundaries, institutions, and legal charter – to have been authentically constituted. On average, 60 percent agree that, "our constitution expresses the hopes and values of the people" (see Table 5). Even in Kenya, where ideas of checks and balances on executive power were widely debated during the 2002 election campaign, two thirds of the population still considers the existing, Moi-era legal framework to be legitimate. Note, however, that many folk, especially in Mozambique, don't know what a constitution is, or what their country's founding document contains.

Generally speaking, people also accept the legal rulings of the state as binding on their own behavior. Three quarters think that the police have the right to make people obey the law; 70 percent take this view about the courts; and 65 percent say the same about the tax department (Afrobarometer 2004a, Section 4.4). Even in Nigeria, where most people condemn the police as corrupt, a large majority also acknowledges that their orders should be obeyed. And, while people may evade taxes in many places, only in Lesotho do they dispute the principle that the state has a right to collect such revenues. Public opinion is uncertain, however, about whether political elites respect the law. On the positive side, a slim majority (55 percent) thinks that, "the president…rarely or never…ignores the constitution" (see Table 5). Rightly or wrongly, President Nujoma is held to be especially law-abiding in Namibia (77 percent) but President Obasanjo is seen to be deficient in respecting the provisions of the federal constitution of Nigeria (33 percent).

Finally, it is reasonable to suppose that official corruption will erode the consent of the governed. The Afrobarometer confirms that the general public perceives widespread corruption among state officials. On average, about one in three thinks that "most" or "all" officials are engaged in corrupt acts. As expected, perceptions vary by the type of official: people are twice as likely to perceive extensive corruption among the police (43 percent) than in the office of the national president (19 percent). In between, people deem immigration officers and other government officials to be somewhat more corrupt than officers of the court system or elected representatives.

There is also considerable variation in perceived levels of corruption across the continent. In general, West Africans are least charitable about the honesty of their leaders. For example, almost three quarters of Nigerians (71 percent) criticize the Nigeria Police Force on this score. But there are West African exceptions: the residents of Cape Verde generally give their leaders high marks for honesty, though more than half of them consistently report that they "don't know enough" about the inner workings of state agencies to hazard an informed opinion. And, as of 2002, Ghanaians thought that the presidency under

Table 5: Popular Perceptions of State Legitimacy, 15 African Countries, 2002-3

	Disagree Strongly/ Disagree	Neither	Agree/ Agree Strongly	Don't Know
Please tell me whether you disagree or agree:				
Our constitution expresses the values and hopes of the people of (this country).	18	8	60	14
The police always have the right to make people obey the law.	15	7	76	2
The courts have the right to make decisions that people must abide by.	17	9	70	4
The tax department always has the right to make people pay taxes	20	9	75	7
	Never/Rarely		Often/Always	Don't Know
In this country, how often:				
Does the president ignore the constitution?	55		22	22
Do people have to be careful of what they say about politics?	49		46	5
Are people treated unequally under the law?	48		42	11
	None/Some		Most/All	Don't Know/ Haven't Heard
How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption:				
The president and officials in his office?	56		19	25
Elected leaders, such as parliamentarians and local councilors?	55		23	22
Judges and magistrates	51		28	22
Government officials	51		31	18
Border officials (customs and immigration)	39		39	22
Police	43		43	14
	Much Less/ Less	Same	More/ Much More	Don't Know
Comparing the current system of government and the former system of government, would you say that the one we have now is more or less: Corrupt?	34	18	37	11
	Never	Once or Twice/ A Few Times	Often	Don't Know
How often, if ever, have you had to pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favor to a government official in order to:				
Get a document or a permit?	86	10	2	1
Get a child into school?	91	4	1	1
Get a household service (e.g. water, electricity, telephone)?	91	5	2	2
Cross a border?	85	5	2	2
Avoid a problem with the police?	88	8	3	2

N= 23,197 Afrobarometer survey respondents

John Kufuor was abiding by high ethical standards. Otherwise, citizens in Southern Africa – notably from Botswana, Lesotho and Mozambique – tend to see the lowest levels of corruption.

Moreover, Round 2 Afrobarometer results reconfirm that Africans perceive more corruption than they actually experience. Asked how often in the past year respondents had to "pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favor to government officials," an average of just 9 percent report engaging in any such illicit transaction. A person's experience of corruption does, however, influence her perceptions. These variables are positively correlated, though perhaps not as strongly as one might expect.[14] So there are other factors – perhaps promises of reform by new leaders, or media coverage of corruption cases, even popular rumor – that pump up popular perceptions of embedded corruption within African states. The key question of course is whether any aspect of corruption, along with other state characteristics, has an impact on the prospects for democracy in African countries. The next sections of this article turn to this inquiry.

The State-Regime Relationship: A Macro-Statistical Test

When modeling the state-regime relationship, I assume as a working hypothesis that state building precedes the consolidation of democracy. This direction of causality is certainly consistent with propositions from the literature about "stateness" as a prerequisite to democracy (Linz and Stepan, 1996), about the preferred sequence of democratization "forwards" (Rose and Shin 2001), and about the dynamics of the "interactive state" (Hadenius, 2001). As such, I treat the nature of the political regime as a dependent variable and various state characteristics as predictors. To repeat, the purpose of the analysis is to test whether stateness is positively related to democratization. And, if so, which particular aspects of state building are most critical in preparing the way for democracy?

At face value, Table 6 suggests a positive relationship between the characteristics of states in Africa and the nature of African political regimes. It displays the degrees of stateness in each of the six political regimes most commonly found on the continent. Stateness is calculated as a mean score of the World Bank Institute's five governance indices (see Table 2). The range of regimes – from liberal democracy to unreformed autocracy – is based on the classification presented earlier (see Table 1). Table 6 shows that stateness and regime type are positively and significantly connected in almost stepwise fashion.[15] Stronger states are associated with more democratic regimes and weaker states with regimes of lower democratic quality. The strongest states are found in liberal democracies and the weakest states in unreformed autocracies, with a series of downward steps for intermediate regime subtypes. The linearity of this relationship is broken only in the middle of the range where, against the general tendency, liberalized autocracies display slightly superior state characteristics to ambiguous hybrid regimes. This quirk makes intuitive sense insofar as liberalized one-party regimes, while less competitive than fledgling multiparty systems, are often more solidly institutionalized. But the distinction is moot, since the variance in stateness between these hybrid regimes is not statistically significant.[16]

Let us put some meat – in the form of country names and state features – on these bare categorical bones. Of the six countries with the highest levels of stateness, four are liberal democracies (Botswana, Cape Verde, Mauritius, and South Africa) and two are electoral democracies (Namibia and Seychelles). According to the WBI, Seychelles has the continent's best reputation for political stability, Botswana leads Africa in government effectiveness, and Mauritius excels in the rule of law. It is true that the state context is not as comprehensively favorable to democratization in Africa's one remaining liberal democracy (Sao Tome and Principe), but at least its ineffective government scores well on political stability.

At the other end of the scale, African countries with low levels of stateness are characterized principally by political *in*stability, and many have experienced civil war.[17] Although countries like Angola, Burundi, Nigeria and Sudan score low on all governance dimensions, their primary shortcoming is that

Table 6: African Political Regimes, by State Characteristics, 2002

REGIME TYPE	Regime Subtype	Political Stability	Government Effectiveness	Regulatory Quality	Rule of Law	Control of Corruption	STATENESS
DEMOCRACY	Liberal Democracy	.604	.216	.262	.308	.346	**.347**
	Electoral Democracy	.183	-.356	-.331	-.166	-.292	**-.192**
SEMI-DEMOCRACY/ SEMI-AUTOCRACY	Ambiguous Hybrid	-.562	-.898	-.840	-.795	-.980	**-.815**
AUTOCRACY	Liberalized Autocracy (Competitive)	-.640	-.930	-.776	-.823	-.818	**-.797**
	Liberalized Autocracy (Hegemonic)	-1.103	-.892	-.794	-.986	-.805	**-.916**
	Unreformed Autocracy	-1.381	-1.120	-1.227	-1.269	-.789	**-1.157**

Notes:

Entries are mean values for all countries in each regime subtype. Country scores are standardized to a normal distribution with a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one. Thus, virtually all country scores lie between –2.5 and +2.5, with higher scores corresponding to better state characteristics.

Source: Daniel Kauffman, Aart Kraay, and Massimo Mastruzzi, "Governance Matters III: Governance Indicators for 1996-2002", *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 3106*, www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance/govdata2002.

N = 48 countries

governments have yet to establish reliable control over territories. None possesses conducive conditions for democracy. Thus many are unreformed autocracies (like Somalia and Congo-Kinshasa) or, at best, liberalized autocracies with hegemonic ruling groups (like Charles Taylor's Liberia).

It is worth noting, however, that certain non-democratic regimes have attained stable states, as evidenced by positive WBI scores for political stability. These include ambiguous hybrid regimes like Malawi and Mozambique, competitive autocracies like Gabon and Gambia, hegemonic autocracies like Mauritania and Equatorial Guinea, and even unreformed autocracies like Swaziland. As argued elsewhere, "the greatest risk to the consolidation of new democracies in Africa is that the architecture of the regime hardens prematurely, that is, before democratic institutions or beliefs have had a chance to take root" (Bratton et al., 2004, Ch. 13, p. 6). In short, many types of regime may consolidate in Africa, but few will be democracies.

But which dimension of stateness contributes most to the growth of democracy? This question begs multivariate analysis, which is now undertaken at the macro level with aggregate WBI data. In this instance, the object of explanation is the quality of democracy as measured along the continuous scale of the Freedom House status of freedom for each African country in 2002 (See Table 1). For ease of interpretation, this indicator is inverted to run from 1 (low) to 7 (high). The independent variables are the now-familiar WBI governance indices, plus a macro-level proxy to represent the scope of the state. On the assumption that the radius of the state's service infrastructure is a function of public expenditure, this proxy is gross public investment per capita in 1999.[18]

Table 7 presents multivariate regression results. It shows, first, that each state characteristic – whether the scope of the state or every internal dimensions of state governance – is strongly and significantly correlated with the quality of democracy (see r statistics in column 2). When taken together, these macro-state characteristics collectively explain 58 percent of the variance in the quality of democracy. But, since these characteristics are also correlated with one other – thus forming the single factor of stateness – it is necessary to introduce mutual controls in order to discern which ones are carrying the bulk of the explanatory load (see beta coefficients).

Model 1 offers a clear answer. The strongest explanatory consideration is the *rule of law*, which embraces and subsumes all other dimensions of stateness. In other words, the rule of law represents a stable and effective state that enforces market friendly policies and controls corruption. Remarkably, an extremely efficient explanation of the quality of democracy can be constructed using the rule of law alone. As Model 2 shows, this aspect of state governance explains fully 60 percent of the variance in democracy!

This relationship is so powerful and enveloping, however, that it calls into question the validity of the model. There is reason to believe that the WBI's index of the rule of law is a regime indicator rather than (or as much as) a state indicator. The fact that it is highly correlated with the FH status of freedom (r and beta = .782***) is evidence enough of conceptual overlap (see Model 2). In order to eliminate this problem and to reveal the underlying contributions to democratization of other aspects of state building, I construct Model 3, which excludes the rule of law. Model 3 is still a robust formulation, which explains 55 percent of the variance in the quality of democracy. It is now possible to see, however, that *regulatory quality* and *political stability* also matter. Apparently, a state that is restrained from comprehensive intervention in the economy is conducive to democratization. This linkage points to a basic compatibility between economic and political reforms, with the liberalization in the economic sphere creating an enabling environment for the democratization of politics. Finally, Model 3 confirms (as if such confirmation were still necessary) that democracy is easier to attain under conditions of uncontested political order, peace, and stability.

Table 7: The Quality of Democracy[a], by Characteristics of the State
(multivariate OLS regression, macro-level data)

	R	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
		B	**S.E.**	**Beta**	**B**	**S.E.**	**Beta**	**B**	**S.E.**	**Beta**
Constant		4.822	.372		4.920	.203		4.646	.374	
Dimensions of Governance										
Rule of Law	.782***	1.493	.748	.621*	1.879	.221	.782***	-	-	-
Regulatory Quality	.722**	.716	.546	.278	-	-	-	1.045	.539	.406*
Government Effectiveness	.677**	-.510	.610	-.194	-	-	-	-.099	.594	-.037
Political Stability	.670**	.187	.243	.123	-	-	-	.446	.213	.293*
Control of Corruption	.647**	.056	.486	-.021	-	-	-	.345	.458	.131
The Scope of the State										
Public Investment per capita	.540**	.0002	.002	.018	-	-	-	.001	.002	.090
Full Model	.796		**Adj R^2**	**= .580**		**Adj R^2**	**= .603**		**Adj R^2**	**= .550**

Notes:

* p <.10
**p <.01
***p <.001

a. The dependent variable is status of freedom (Freedom House, 2002) The score for each country is calculated as the mean of the political rights and civil liberties in Table 1, inverted to run from 1 [low] to 7 [high]).

N = 48 countries

The utility of state capacity – or, as the WBI dubs it, government effectiveness – is the only remaining puzzle in this macro-level analysis. This variable displays a negative sign in Models 1 and 3. It seems counterintuitive, not to mention contrary to the thesis of this article, that *less* effective states would be *more* democratic. My interpretation is that donor-driven elections have been introduced into a wide range of African countries, including in some in which the state has yet to completely penetrate their societies. In this respect, Rose and Shin correctly characterize the Third Wave as democratization "backwards," but not for the reasons they claim. Africa's new liberal and electoral democracies are not so much bereft of a rule of law, civil society and political accountability, as they are of institutions that can deliver the basic order and services of a modern state.

In order to further explore these emerging relationships, this article ends with a micro-level analysis. Attention is given to understanding the effects of state characteristics on democratization as perceived by ordinary African citizens. I want to know in precisely *which* state capacities and *which* aspects of state legitimacy help to build democracy.

The State-Regime Relationship: A Micro-Statistical Model

The same set of relationships – state building predicting the extent of democratization – is now estimated with survey data.[19] The dependent variable in this instance is the Afrobarometer's popularly perceived *supply of democracy*, which is constructed by averaging individual opinions on satisfaction with democracy and the extent of democracy.[20] The predictor variables are various Afrobarometer indicators of the scope, capacities, and legitimacy of the state.

The *scope of the state* is measured along three dimensions, extracted by factor analysis from the public services listed in Table 3. This analysis distinguishes *economic infrastructure* (electricity, water, sewer, and paved road), *political infrastructure* (police station, post office, and police and army visible in the locality), and *social infrastructure* (schools and health clinics).

The results of the microanalysis (Table 8) reinforce findings from the macro analysis (Table 7). For example, we can confirm that the extension of a central state into outlying areas has, on its own, little meaningful bearing on the perceived availability of democracy.[21] With reference to political infrastructure, the mere presence of a police station or the visibility of a police force does not convince ordinary people that democracy is being attained in their country. Much instead depends on the comportment of the officers of the state, whose behavior toward human rights can either reinforce or undermine democratic norms. As for social and economic infrastructure, Table 8 shows that the scope of the state can be negatively related to democratization. In other words, the provision of a health clinic or a piped water scheme is insufficient to convert African citizens into satisfied democrats. Quite the contrary, people are much more critical about the supply of democracy in urban areas where such facilities are relatively plentiful than in the countryside where a majority of Africans still lack a reliable supply of clean household water and accessible health care services. Indeed, rural folk are not only more accepting of whatever quality of rule the authorities supply, but they are also prone to take the provision of socioeconomic services as evidence of political democratization.

But the effects of the state scope are weak, accounting as they do for less than one percent of the total variance in democratization. Much more powerful, at 16 percent of variance explained, are the effects of various aspects of state capacity.

S*tate capacity* is operationalized with five indicators dawn from Table 4. *Law enforcement capacity* is constructed from two items that ask respondents to compare the performance of present and past regimes in enforcing the law and providing safety from crime and violence.[22] *Responsive capacity* combines popular views of whether elected leaders "listen to" ordinary people and "look after the(ir) interests."[23]

Administrative capacity summarizes individual perceptions of the ease or difficulty involved in obtaining six standard public services, ranging from a voter's card to a transfer payment.[24] What I now call *development capacity* is captured by the generic question about the proportion of national problems that the government is seen to be capable of solving. And *welfare capacity* is measured by a question that scores whether people turn to the state – as opposed to kin, community, or market – for assistance in overcoming shortages of household services like water, medical care, and electricity.[25]

Table 8 reveals that Africans consider that *law enforcement* is the single most important capacity of a democratizing state. Alone, this capacity accounts for more than one tenth of the variance in the perceived supply of democracy. From a popular perspective, democratization is held to be occurring to the extent that people think that the state authorities can reliably enforce the law of the land. In particular, people judge the quality of democracy according to whether – today as compared to the past – they perceive improvements in personal security. In the aftermath of a democratic transition in 2002, for example, Kenyans were hopeful that the state would serve as a mediator rather than a sponsor of ethnic conflict. And in Ghana, citizens celebrate national peace and relatively low crime rates by endorsing their country's gradual process of democratization. By contrast, Nigerians are already losing faith in democracy in the face of the evident impotence of federal and state governments to contain escalating incidents of religious strife. And, from the outset, South Africans have been skeptical about the ability of their fledgling democratic regime to solve the country's endemic problems of crime and social violence.

Democracy's popular prospects also depend on the *responsive capacity* of leaders vis a vis popular needs. In most African countries, large territories and poor communications contribute to a wide representation gap between elected officials and their constituents. In times of need, ordinary people tend to bypass the officials of the state and turn instead to informal leaders in the community, including pastors and imams, traditional chiefs and businesspeople. People also tend to distrust the institutions of political representation – like parliaments and political parties – and to hold them in much lower esteem than executive branch institutions. In a context where most Africans find state elites remote and self-interested, a little bit of political responsiveness goes a long way. When national legislators and local government councilors open their offices or convene public meetings to listen to their constituents, democracy's reputation improves. This outcome is confirmed not only by the large regression coefficient in Table 8, but by the exceptional example of Mali. Numerous efforts have been made in this country to decentralize the structure of the state – from public *concertations* on reform issues, to the empowerment of local *commune* governments, to call-in shows on FM community radio – that have boosted not only the state's capacity to respond but, with it, citizen assessments of democracy.

To a lesser extent, people also judge democratization according to whether public services are easy to obtain (administrative capacity) and whether they generally think the state can solve national problems (development capacity). Note, however, that the regression coefficient for access to basic human needs (welfare capacity) has a negative sign. This indicates that, even if people are able to address their material needs by turning to an agency of the state, there are no positive consequences for democracy. I take this as additional evidence that the state's ability to deliver economic goods does not automatically result in popular democratic satisfaction.

Finally, we turn to *state legitimacy*. This aspect of state building – which accounts for 13 percent of the variance in democracy's supply – packs almost as much explanatory punch as state capacity. The model in Table 8 captures the legitimacy of the state in three distinct ways. First, *violations of the rule of law* is an average index of three items that measure whether people perceive unconstitutional acts by the president, feel constraints on free speech, and receive unequal treatment under the law.[26] Second, the *authenticity of the constitution* is represented by popular judgments of whether this document, "expresses the values and aspirations of the people." Finally, the model contains *three measures of corruption*: an

index of popular perceptions of corruption's extent today,[27] a popular evaluation of the trend in corruption since the political transition, and a scale of actual corruption experiences.[28]

The regression model in Table 8 attests that *violations of the rule of law* are highly corrosive to democracy. The relevant coefficient is large, significant and, as expected, negative. For example, the more frequently the president is seen to ignore the constitution, the *less* likely are citizens to think that state elites are supplying democracy, a consideration that is especially resonant among Nigerians. The same result occurs if people feel wary about openly expressing their political views or if they suspect discriminatory treatment by public officials. To a degree not widely appreciated in the literature, Africans are gaining awareness of civil and political rights – especially freedom of speech and the right to vote – and they use these standards as benchmarks for understanding and assessing democracy (Bratton et al, 2004, Ch 3). There is even trace evidence of an emerging popular appreciation of constitutionalism among those who think that Africa's new legal frameworks are authentic expressions of popular will. Despite – or perhaps because of – a bumpy and unfinished road to democracy in Zambia, the electorate is now firmly committed (86 percent) to the constitutional principle of presidential term limits. To the extent that state officials abide by these sorts of legal guidelines, then Africans are willing to give democracy the benefit of the doubt.

But official *corruption* – which is always negatively related to democratization – remains a major stumbling block. The more widely that state officials are seen to engage in illegal rent seeking, the *lower* are popular assessments of democratic supply. Nigeria is again the prototypical example, where perceived corruption is not only higher than in any other country surveyed, but where the supply of democracy is among the lowest in the Afrobarometer sample. This general relationship holds across time: if corruption is seen as getting worse since the political transition, there is a drop in popular evaluations of the extent of democracy. The inability of the Obasanjo administration in Nigeria to fulfill early promises of an anti-corruption crusade has caused many Nigerians to lose faith in the in the possibility of meaningful political change. This negative relationship holds even for citizens' concrete encounters with graft, though the model verifies that perceptions matter much more than actual experiences. In this regard, Africa's prospects for democracy depend critically whether state elites can establish a reputation for probity and honesty in the eyes of ordinary people.

Interpretations and Conclusions

Noting that scholars of African politics hold opposing views, this article began by asking: Does state or democracy take precedence? Guided by comparative theories, I have modeled the state-regime relationship in African countries as if state building is a prerequisite of democratization. Using both aggregate and individual data from sub-Saharan Africa, the analyses in this article affirm that state characteristics have profound and formative effects on the prospects for democracy. By way of conclusion, however, I wish to indicate how these results also call into question the primacy of a purely state-centered approach to African politics.

To begin with, I find no evidence that the scope of the state – meaning the empirical radius of an official institutional infrastructure – has any connection to democratization. The mere presence of a centrally sponsored network of political, social and economic services is neutral for the nature of the political regime. States that penetrate the periphery of their territories are just as likely to represent authoritarian or hybrid regimes as democratic ones. This result is consistent across aggregate and individual levels of analysis. What matters instead for democracy are other state characteristics, such as capacity and legitimacy, or what other researchers have called the dimensions of good governance.

According to the opinions of African citizens themselves, what matters *most* for democratization is whether the state has the empirical capacity to fulfill its prime function: creating political order. Political

Table 8: The Supply of Democracy[a], by Popular Perceptions of the State
(multivariate OLS regression, micro-level data)

	R	B[b]	S.E.[c]	Beta	Adj. R^2 (block)	Adj. R^2 (cumul.)
Constant		1.956	.075***			
State Scope					**.009**	.009
Economic Infrastructure	-.087**	-.032***	.005	-.045		
Social Infrastructure	-.055**	-.020*	.009	-.014		
Political Infrastructure	-.052**	.009	.007	.009		
State Capacity					**.157**	.161
Law Enforcement Capacity	.333***	.275***	.007	.233		
Responsive Capacity	.187**	.161***	.008	.122		
Administrative Capacity	.174**	.150***	.010	.091		
Development Capacity	.109**	.068***	.007	.059		
Welfare Capacity	-.060**	-.173***	.040	-.025		
State Legitimacy					**.132**	.225
Violations of the Rule of Law	-.263***	-.222***	.009	-.160		
Authenticity of the Constitution	.216**	.119***	.006	.116		
Perceptions of Corruption	-.196**	-.178***	.012	-.097		
Evaluation of Corruption Trend	-.148**	-.061***	.005	-.068		
Experience of Corruption	-.065**	-.032*	.016	-.012		
Full Model	.475		.977			**.225**

Notes:

* p <.05
** p <.01
*** p <.001

a. The dependent variable (*supply of democracy*) is an average of *satisfaction with democracy* and the perceived *extent of democracy*.

b. $B = \frac{1}{m}\sum_{j=1}^{m} B_j$, where *m* is the number of data set and B_j is the coefficient from data set *j*.

c. $S.E. = \sqrt{\frac{1}{m}\sum_{j=1}^{m} SE(B_j)^2 + S_B^2(1+\frac{1}{m})}$, where $SE(B_j) =$ standard error of B_j from data set *j* and $S_B^2 = \sum_{j=1}^{m} \frac{(B_j - B)}{(m-1)}$.

N = 23,197 Afrobarometer survey respondents

regimes are judged by the acid test of personal security, which must show improvements if the general public is to conclude that democracy is being installed. This finding lends substance to the emerging consensus in the comparative politics literature that, in the consolidation of new democracies, the delivery of political goods trumps the provision of economic goods (Evans and Whitefield, 1995; Rose et al.,

1998; Bratton et al., 2004). This article provides a specification of precisely *which political goods* are most likely to induce popular confidence in democracy. I argue that order is paramount. If the state can attain political stability, regulate conflict within its borders, and protect the citizenry from criminals, then people will conclude that democracy is being supplied. Moreover, contrary to conventional wisdom, Africans do not refer to the delivery of official welfare services in forming positive opinions about the desirability of democracy.

As of today, there is considerable variation in the degree of political order achieved across sub-Saharan Africa. African countries run the gamut from stable polities to collapsing states. Yet, in a striking regularity, political order usually goes together with democratic regimes. The contrast between peaceful Botswana (a top-ranked democracy) and war-torn Sudan (a bottom-ranked autocracy) graphically illustrates the extremes. The direction of this relationship is debatable, however. Is Botswana a democracy because it is peaceful? Or is it peaceful because it is a democracy? Is Sudan a dictatorship because it faces a separatist insurgency in the south? Or is it unstable because leaders who forced their way into power now choose to mobilize private militias to conduct the dirty business of genocide in Darfur?

The concept of state legitimacy is helpful in resolving this dilemma. The analyses in this article consistently point to the *quality* of the political order established by the state. Specifically, is it a *legal* order that induces *voluntary* popular compliance? Using country level data, I have found that the rule of law trumps all other state attributes in explaining the emergence of democracy. Similarly, at the individual level, I have discovered that democracy is most likely in countries where the state elite is perceived to engage in the fewest violations of the rule of law.

But whence does a rule of law originate? It comes into existence when political actors place constitutional and other statutory limits on the exercise of raw state power and when parties to political disputes adjudicate their differences with reference to written rules. In short, the rule of law involves the application of legal procedures to the performance of state functions. In the opening paragraph of this article, states were defined as structures of authority and regimes as sets of rule-governed procedures. With reference to this distinction alone, one is therefore led to suppose that the rule of law is as much an attribute of regimes as of states. And the statistical models presented in this paper strongly suggest that, especially when whole countries are analyzed in the aggregate, that the rule of law is a defining characteristic of a democratic regime.

To be sure, it is possible to find historical examples of the rule of law under authoritarian arrangements, whether in Bismarck's German *rechtstaat* or in *apartheid* South Africa. But these exceptional or vestigial cases exemplify a rule *by* law, aimed at enforcing the privileges of an oligarchy, rather than a rule *of* law, which starts from first principles of political equality and voluntary consent. In the contemporary era, legal processes like constitutionalism and judicial review are part and parcel of the democracy package, inseparable from other democratic principles like civil liberties and voting rights. Especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where personal rulers have long governed arbitrarily, the establishment of a rule of law is at once an objective, a strategy, and a tactic of democratic reformers. In short, in the 21st century, democracy exemplifies the quintessential rule of law regime.

If the rule of law is an implicit characteristic of democracy, then the causal arrow between state and regime must be reversed. It is democratization that legitimates states by obtaining for rulers the voluntary compliance of the citizenry. I would therefore argue against posing a false choice between democratization "forwards" or "backwards." To be sure, it is impossible to democratize successfully in the absence of the political order that only a state can provide. But, by the same token, the state is unlikely to provide a durable order unless it is legitimated by democracy. Thus, the best way forward is for state building and democratization to evolve together.

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Endnotes

[1] This variable is coded on a five-point scale from "not at all satisfied" to "very satisfied."
[2] The response categories are: "a full democracy", "a democracy, but with minor problems," "a democracy with major problems," and "not a democracy."
[3] By December 2002, alternations had also occurred in four electoral democracies: Benin, Mali, Senegal and Ghana.
[4] For a classification of African regimes based on press freedoms, see Herbst (2000). The distribution of countries closely resembles Table 1.
[5] The most useful recent studies on African elections are Daniel, Southall and Szeftel (1999), Abbink and Hesseling (2000), and Cowen and Laakso (2002).
[6] See Magnusson (2001, 222-6). For contrast, see Linda Beck's portrayal of the National Assembly in Senegal as "the chamber of applause" (2003, 163).
[7] See Bratton (1998). For a glass-half-full reinterpretation, see Lindberg (2004).
[8] The authors use "an extension of the standard unobserved components model which expresses the observed data in each cluster as a linear function of the unobserved common component of governance, plus a disturbance term capturing perception errors and/or sampling variation." They also assume that errors are independent across sources, which implies that "the only reason why two sources might be correlated with each other is because they are both measuring the same underlying unobserved governance dimension" (Kauffmann, et al., 2003, 8).
[9] Moreover, the WBI's "voice and accountability" index is based centrally on Freedom House (FH) scores, with which it correlates at r = .959***. Yet FH scores are usually taken to measure the quality of democracy, as in this article. Therefore, when predicting democracy from stateness, it is inadmissible to have the same variable on both sides of the equation.
[10] Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, and South Africa.
[11] Angola, Burundi, Nigeria, Somalia, and Sudan.
[12] Maximum likelihood extraction produced one factor with an Eigenvalue of 4.12 that explains 78.9 percent of variance. The factor scales extremely reliably at Cronbach's Alpha = .924. In fact, the construct is so valid and reliable that one wonders whether the WBI measurements are independent from one another.
[13] See Afrobarometer Network (2004a), Sections 2.4 and 4.3.
[14] For example, for police corruption, Pearson's r = .129***.
[15] The F statistic in a one-way analysis of variance is significant at $p < .0001$.
[16] A two-tailed t test is insignificant at p =.925.
[17] Over two standard deviations below the mean of zero for Burundi, Congo-Kinshasa, Ivory Coast, and Liberia.
[18] Calculated from data in World Bank (2001), p.6 and 23.
[19] A multiple imputation program (*Amelia*) was used to eliminate missing values in the Afrobarometer Round 2 data set and to arrive at 23,197 cases. To reflect the uncertainty with which imputed values cluster around a predicted regression line, five data sets were produced, from which regression coefficients were calculated using average or other formulae shown in the footnotes to Table 8. Thanks are due to Wonbin Cho for technical assistance.
[20] For details on these items, see endnotes 1 and 2. To construct *supply of democracy*, these items were converted to five point scales (with "don't knows" etc. as a middle value), aggregated, and divided by two.
[21] At the aggregate level, public investment per capita is correlated with the quality of democracy in a bivariate analysis. But these expenditures turn insignificant in a multivariate analysis because they are absorbed into, and represented by, programs to establish a rule of law and other aspects of good governance.
[22] While factor analysis indicates the existence of a valid construct, its reliability is low (Alpha = .452).
[23] The reliability of this index is high (Alpha = .883).
[24] The reliability of this index is acceptable (Alpha = .610).
[25] The reliability of this index is acceptable (Alpha = .567).
[26] The reliability of this index is acceptable (Alpha = .597).
[27] Across six types of state official, the reliability of this index is high (Alpha = .882).
[28] With reference to bribes for five types of public service, the reliability of this index is high (Alpha = .790).